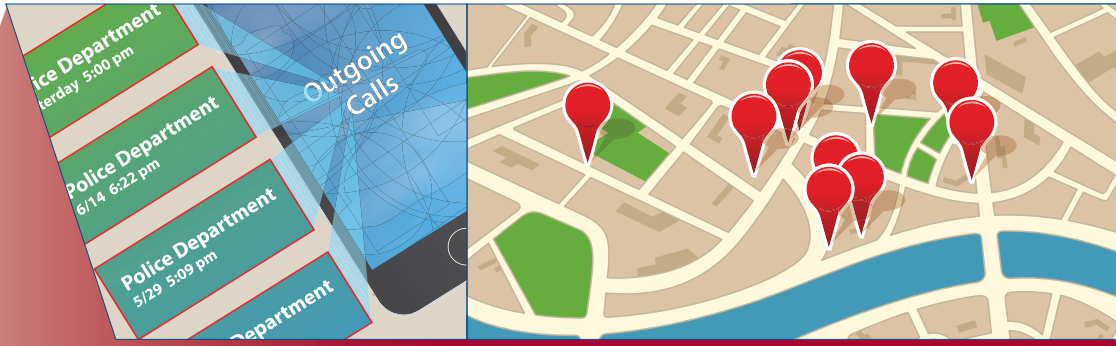
COPS
Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice

Problem-Solving Tools Series
Problem-Oriented Guides for Police

No. 13

Identifying and Defining Policing Problems

Michael S. Scott



Center for
Problem-Oriented Policing

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Identifying and Defining Policing Problems

Michael S. Scott

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About the Problem-Solving Tools Series

The *Problem-Solving Tools* are one of three series of the Problem-Oriented Guides for Police. The other two are the Problem-Specific Guides and Response Guides.

The *Problem-Oriented Guides for Police* summarize knowledge about how police can reduce the harm caused by specific crime and disorder problems. They are guides to preventing problems and improving overall incident response, not to investigating offenses or handling specific incidents. Neither do they cover all of the technical details about how to implement specific responses. The guides are written for police—of whatever rank or assignment—who must address the specific problems the guides cover. The guides will be most useful to officers who:

- Understand basic problem-oriented policing principles and methods
- Can look at problems in depth
- Are willing to consider new ways of doing police business
- Understand the value and the limits of research knowledge
- Are willing to work with other community agencies to find effective solutions to problems

The *Problem-Solving Tools* summarize knowledge about information gathering and analysis techniques that might assist police at any of the four main stages of a problem-oriented project: scanning, analysis, response, and assessment. Each guide:

- Describes the kind of information produced by each technique
- Discusses how the information could be useful in problem-solving
- Gives examples of previous uses of the technique
- Provides practical guidance about adapting the technique to specific problems
- Provides templates of data collection instruments (where appropriate)
- Suggests how to analyze data gathered by using the technique
- Shows how to interpret the information correctly and present it effectively
- Warns about any ethical problems in using the technique
- Discusses the limitations of the technique when used by police in a problem-oriented project
- Provides reference sources of more detailed information about the technique
- Indicates when police should seek expert help in using the technique

Extensive technical and scientific literature covers each technique addressed in the *Problem-Solving Tools*. The guides aim to provide only enough information about each technique to enable police and others to use it in the course of problem-solving. In most cases, the information gathered during a problem-solving project does not have to withstand rigorous scientific scrutiny. Where police need greater confidence in the data, they might need expert help in using the technique. This can often be found in local university departments of sociology, psychology, and criminal justice.

The information needs for any single project can be quite diverse, and it will often be necessary to use a variety of data collection techniques to meet those needs. Similarly, a variety of different analytic techniques may be needed to analyze the data. Police and crime analysts may be unfamiliar with some of the techniques, but the effort invested in learning to use them can make all the difference to the success of a project.

The COPS Office defines community policing as "a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies, which support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime." These guides emphasize problem-solving and police-community partnerships in the context of addressing specific public safety problems. For the most part, the organizational strategies that can facilitate problem-solving and police-community partnerships vary considerably and discussion of them is beyond the scope of these guides.

These guides have drawn on research findings and police practices in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia. Even though laws, customs and police practices vary from country to country, it is apparent that the police everywhere experience common problems. In a world that is becoming increasingly interconnected, it is important that police be aware of research and successful practices beyond the borders of their own countries.

Each guide is informed by a thorough review of the research literature and reported police practice, and each guide is anonymously peer-reviewed by a line police officer, a police executive and a researcher prior to publication. The review process is independently managed by the COPS Office, which solicits the reviews.

For more information about problem-oriented policing, visit the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing online at www.popcenter.org. This website offers free online access to:

- The *Problem-Specific Guides* series
- The companion *Response Guides and Problem-Solving Tools* series
- Special publications on crime analysis and on policing terrorism
- Instructional information about problem-oriented policing and related topics
- An interactive problem-oriented policing training exercise
- An interactive *Problem Analysis Module*
- Online access to important police research and practices
- Information about problem-oriented policing conferences and award programs

Acknowledgments

The *Problem-Oriented Guides for Police* are produced by the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing, whose officers are Michael S. Scott (Director), Ronald V. Clarke (Associate Director), and Graeme R. Newman (Associate Director). While each guide has a primary author, other project team members, COPS Office staff, and anonymous peer reviewers contributed to each guide by proposing text, recommending research, and offering suggestions on matters of format and style.

The project team that developed the guide series comprised Herman Goldstein (University of Wisconsin Law School), Ronald V. Clarke (Rutgers University), John E. Eck (University of Cincinnati), Michael S. Scott (Center for Problem-Oriented Policing), Rana Sampson (Police Consultant), and Deborah Lamm Weisel (North Carolina State University).

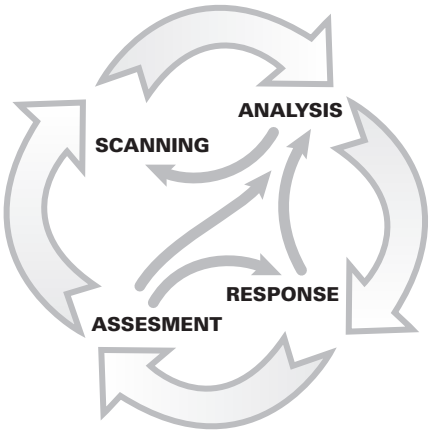
Members of the San Diego; National City, California; and Savannah, Georgia, police departments provided feedback on the guides' format and style in the early stages of the project.

John Eck helped conceptualize the guide. Kimberly Nath oversaw the project for the COPS Office. Phyllis Schultze conducted research for the guide at Rutgers University's Criminal Justice Library. Nancy Leach coordinated the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing's production process. Marian Haggard edited this guide.

Introduction

This *Problem-Solving Tools* guidebook deals with the process of identifying and defining policing problems. Under the most widely adopted police problem-solving model—the SARA (Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment) model—the process of identifying and defining policing problems is referred to as the Scanning phase. The Scanning phase is distinct from the Analysis phase, which principally is about explaining the problem's causes and contributing factors; the Response phase, which is about developing, selecting, and implementing new responses to the problem; and the Assessment phase, which principally is about measuring the impact that new responses had on the problem.

Figure 1. The SARA model of problem solving



The advice provided in this guidebook is based primarily upon theory and practice: there is no evaluative research into what methods most accurately and efficiently identify and define policing problems.

Related Problem-Solving Tools Guides

This guidebook complements others in the *Problem-Solving Tools* series. The following other *Problem-Solving Tools* guidebooks address various aspects of these other three phases.*

Analysis Phase

- *Researching a Problem* (Guide No. 2)
- *Using Offender Interviews to Inform Police Problem Solving* (Guide No. 3)
- *Analyzing Repeat Victimization* (Guide No. 4)
- *Partnering With Businesses to Address Public Safety Problems* (Guide No. 5)
- *Understanding Risky Facilities* (Guide No. 6)

* Some guidebooks address aspects of more than one phase of the problem-solving model.

- *Using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design in Problem Solving* (Guide No. 8)
- *Enhancing the Problem-Solving Capacity of Crime Analysis Units* (Guide No. 9)
- *Analyzing and Responding to Repeat Offending* (Guide No. 11)
- *Understanding Theft of 'Hot Products'* (Guide No. 12)

Response Phase

- *Analyzing Repeat Victimization* (Guide No. 4)
- *Partnering With Businesses to Address Public Safety Problems* (Guide No. 5)
- *Understanding Risky Facilities* (Guide No. 6)
- *Implementing Responses to Problems* (Guide No. 7)
- *Using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design in Problem Solving* (Guide No. 8)
- *Analyzing and Responding to Repeat Offending* (Guide No. 11)
- *Understanding Theft of 'Hot Products'* (Guide No. 12)

Assessment Phase

- *Assessing Responses to Problems: An Introductory Guide for Police Problem Solvers* (Guide No. 1)
- *Analyzing Repeat Victimization* (Guide No. 4)
- *Using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design in Problem Solving* (Guide No. 8)
- *Analyzing Crime Displacement and Diffusion* (Guide No. 10)
- *Analyzing and Responding to Repeat Offending* (Guide No. 11)
- *Understanding Theft of 'Hot Products'* (Guide No. 12)

Understanding a 'Problem' as a Basic Police Work Unit

Dealing with troublesome situations that threaten the public's safety and security is the essence of police work.[1] The public expects the police to deal with all manner of problems, ranging from minor public nuisances to serious criminal conduct. Most commonly, a citizen calls the police to report a troublesome situation—whether a crime, a suspicious circumstance, a hazardous condition, a nuisance, or an accident. Or police officers themselves will spot a troublesome situation and take the initiative in dealing with it. These citizen requests or officer-initiated actions generate the calls-for-service—or incidents—that have long constituted the basic police work unit. If the incident constitutes a crime, it will likely be classified as a criminal case—an alternative form of the basic police work unit. Each incident or case is handled by police, applying standard processes and procedures, with the objective of resolving the situation, at least for the short term. A suspect is arrested, a dispute is settled, an accident is investigated, and reports are made. And police then turn their attention to the next incident or case.

Problem-oriented policing calls for the police to organize at least part of their work around a new basic work unit: a problem. A policing problem is different from an incident or a case. Under problem-oriented policing a problem has the following basic characteristics:

- A problem is of concern to the public and to the police
- A problem involves conduct or conditions that fall within the broad, but not unlimited, responsibilities of the police
- A problem involves multiple, recurring incidents or cases, related to one another in one or more ways
- A problem is unlikely to be resolved without special police intervention[2]

Another way of summarizing these characteristics is by the acronym CHEERS:*

Community	Individuals, groups, or organizations are affected by the problem.
Harmful	The problem causes actual or perceived harm to community members. The harm is not necessarily the result of criminal conduct.
Expectation	The public's expectation that police address the problem is reasonable. Some problems about which citizens call the police are more appropriately addressed by private citizens or organizations, or by other governmental agencies.
Events	The problem is experienced through discrete events that may or may not result in police calls-for-service.
Recurring	The discrete events will have been recurring for some time and, importantly, are likely to continue to recur in the absence of some special police intervention.
Similarity	The discrete events are similar to one another in one or more ways (more on this later in the guide).

Distinguishing Among Problems, Patterns, and Incidents

The distinction between policing *incidents* and policing *problems* is reasonably clear. Less clear is the distinction between *patterns of incidents* and problems. Police routinely deal with lots of incident patterns: a rash of burglaries or vehicle break-ins in a neighborhood, a spate of complaints about speeding along a stretch of roadway, a series of rapes or murders in a community, and so forth. Whether these incident patterns should be addressed through a problem-solving approach or merely through intensive criminal investigation or directed patrol is largely a matter of judgment. The main point is to recognize that there is a distinction to be made.

* See Clarke and Eck n.d. (Step 14) for further discussion of the CHEERS test.

Because problem solving entails deep analysis into the causes and contributing factors underlying problems, it often is more time- and resource-intensive than handling incidents and investigating cases. Many incident patterns will be adequately addressed by applying conventional policing techniques to apprehend or deter known offenders and to aid victims. Generally, problems are distinct from incident patterns in one or more of the following ways:

- Incident patterns occur over a shorter time period (think days or a couple of weeks); problems persist over longer time periods (think months, years, or decades).
- Incident patterns are likely to be the work of one or a relatively small group of offenders and/or affect a relatively small number of victims; problems tend to be the work of a steady stream of new offenders and/or affect a steady stream of new victims.
- Incident patterns tend to occur in one or a few number of locations; problems tend to occur over multiple locations.
- Incident patterns tend to have fairly straightforward causes; problems tend to have multiple and relatively complex causes and contributing factors.

Most important, defining a troublesome situation as a *problem*, as opposed to an *incident pattern*, carries with it a commitment to analyzing the situation so as to understand its causes and contributing factors, and then developing and implementing responses designed to achieve long-term, sustainable improvements in the community's and police's response to the problem.

It is vital that any police agency be capable of responding to and handling incidents; recognizing and interrupting patterns of incidents; and identifying, analyzing, and addressing chronic problems. To do so, your agency should develop and apply the systems and methods most appropriate to the situation.*

* Rachel Boba and Roberto Santos 2011 have developed what they call a *Stratified Model of Problem Solving, Analysis, and Accountability* that is helpful toward this end.

Distinguishing among *incidents*, *incident patterns*, and *problems* reliably and accurately is important primarily because problem solving is often—although not always—resource intensive. Classifying *problems* as *incidents* or as *incident patterns* can result in unnecessary harm to the community because the underlying conditions that give rise to the incidents go unaddressed. Conversely, though, classifying an *incident* or an *incident pattern* as a *problem* can result in resources being expended unnecessarily, whether analytical resources expended studying the situation or operational resources expended responding to it.

Objectives of the Scanning Phase of Problem Solving

The Scanning phase has the following related objectives, each of which will constitute the subject of the remaining sections of this guidebook:

1. Recognizing potential problems that warrant further inquiry by the police
2. Verifying that perceived problems are real and warrant police attention
3. Defining problems precisely, accurately, and in a way that facilitates police addressing them
4. Persuading others to give problems special police attention
5. Determining the appropriate level of aggregation for addressing the problem

Recognizing Potential Policing Problems

The term scanning is used in the SARA model to communicate the idea that you need to actively scan the policing environment to identify troublesome situations that might warrant addressing as problems rather than relying on conventional policing methods—i.e., preventive or directed patrol, handling incidents, investigating cases, arresting offenders—to address the situation. To properly scan your policing environment you should employ various systems and routines designed for this purpose.

Some policing problems are readily apparent because the volume of incidents or the harm being caused by them is so great and so public. A sudden spate of violent sexual assaults reported to police, for example, could readily compel police to not only work to solve the cases, but to re-examine the whole community response to preventing and responding to violent sexual assaults. But many policing problems are not so readily apparent. They might be hidden among the many incidents and cases police are handling, perhaps classified in different reporting categories, occurring in a wide range of locations, or affecting different people. Each incident or case might seem relatively minor in its own right, but prove to be more significant when aggregated into a larger problem. Don't assume that if a problem were significant, it would be obvious to everyone. Many police agencies have discovered that their officers have been handling similar incidents for years or even decades, usually with little or only temporary success, without anyone recognizing the persistent nature of the problem and the need to address it as a problem rather than as a string of isolated incidents. Often times, because so many different police officers handle these incidents, no one officer recognizes the persistence of the problem.

[In 1992] a man began calling the COPS Coordinator's Office complaining about juveniles involved in the drug trade. He claimed to be a neighborhood watch leader, a grand juror, a confidential police informant, and a former military intelligence officer. He spoke about his efforts to rid the neighborhood of crime and gang problems.

After about a dozen such phone calls, we researched the dispatch and incident report files to learn more about these problems and this man. Between January and May of 1992, the police were dispatched to 1718 South 13th St. 27 times. The type of calls varied from minor disturbances to more serious armed robberies and assaults.

In just three years, the man, Mr. H., was listed as the victim in 17 separate felony crime reports, most of which were robberies, burglaries, and assaults. Mr. H. was also arrested for aggravated assault in one of the incidents. Crime summaries showed a pattern in which Mr. H. either reported unknown intruders who assaulted him in his home or unknown assailants who robbed him on the street. The reports further identified a few associates who themselves were regular criminal suspects. Several police officers were injured in a suspicious fire at this address as well.

Almost all of the calls for police service to this address were made by Mr. H. complaining about people not leaving his residence, stealing money from him, or hanging around in the street. Most of these calls were disposed of without a written report.

Over one-hundred staff hours were spent handling the initial criminal investigations alone. Substantial, but undocumented time was further spent handling calls and on follow-up investigations. No single patrol officer or detective, however, handled more than a couple of incidents.

Source: St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department 1993

In October 1994 Seventh District Officers Fran Krupp and Laure Lamczyk received a call to 5876 Kennerly in the Wells-Goodfellow Neighborhood for burglars in the building. They met the caller, Mrs. R., who is in her late 80s and legally blind. Mrs. R. complained that someone had broken into her basement and that she could hear them talking while they did their laundry.

The officers found no signs of intruders. Mrs. R., however, was convinced that someone had entered her basement, but for the time being was satisfied with the officers' inspection.

Fran later recalled hearing several other assignments to that same address in the past. She checked the C.A.D. system and found records of 188 police calls to 5876 Kennerly. This address was listed as the tenth highest call location in the Seventh District. Over the past three years, police were dispatched to this address nearly 300 times for either "burglars in the building" or "disturbances." Fran also discovered that no police reports had ever been completed on these calls—they had all been coded.

Talking with other officers who handled calls at this location, Fran heard the same story over and over—an elderly female calls the police because she hears noises coming from her basement. In all cases, the call was unfounded and coded.

The police department had already spent an estimated 240 staff hours handling the previous calls and it was obvious that if something wasn't done, these calls for service would continue.

Source: St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department 1994

Consider developing and employing the following systems and routines for scanning the policing environment in search of problems.*

Reviewing Police Records

Routinely review the major records systems that document various aspects of a police agency's workload. The most common methods are computer-aided dispatch (CAD) records, and incident reports and investigation case files maintained in a records management system (RMS).

CAD records have the advantage of including many more incidents than do incident/case reports because many police agencies do not require officers to complete a full incident report on some calls: they are permitted to simply report a disposition code in the CAD system. A disadvantage of relying on CAD records to identify problems is that, typically, the information captured in each CAD record is limited and not always accurate. CAD information is typically limited to that information a responding officer needs to have to know where to go and what general type of incident is occurring. Another disadvantage of CAD records is that the incident types are often so general that it makes it difficult to distinguish among widely varying forms of troublesome situations. For example, CAD records might contain many "check man" calls, but those could include everything from an intoxicated person, to a prowler, to a robber casing a robbery target.

Incident or case reports have the advantage of capturing far greater information about each incident than do CAD records. When properly completed, incident reports are also likely to be more accurate because the responding officer has been able to verify facts. But incident/case reports carry the same risk as do CAD records of making it difficult to determine from the report titles or classifications precisely what the incident was about. For example, reports titled as "robbery"—which suffices for describing the crime committed—would not permit one to readily distinguish among bank robberies, street robberies, and home invasion robberies, each of which are quite different in a problem-solving context.

* See Scott and Kirby 2012, pp. 34–37 for further information.

Other police record systems can also be useful for identifying potential problems. Citizen tip lines often generate a lot of information—although not always accurate—about troublesome situations. If your agency converts the reported tips (whether reported on telephone lines or e-mail) to a database, the database can readily be reviewed to detect trends and patterns from among the tips. Because anonymous tips report conditions or conduct that otherwise might not result in a police call-for-service, they can greatly supplement CAD and RMS records for the purpose of identifying potential problems.

In reviewing any police record system, be alert to patterns in the data that suggest repeat call locations or times, repeat incident types, and repeat offenders and victims.* If the software programs that your agency uses to store and analyze these data don't make it easy to sort the data by the frequency with which specific locations, times, people appear in reports, either work with your software vendor to program the software to do so or purchase software that does. Ideally, you should be able to easily sort your CAD or RMS data such that it is easy to discern the most frequent call locations, offenders, victims, and times of occurrence. Likewise, it would be enormously helpful if standard police reports could easily be sorted by the various major contributing factors to the underlying incident, such as incidents that are deemed to be "alcohol-related," "drug-related," "gang-related," "mental illness-related," and so forth.

Figure 2. The Problem Analysis Triangle is a useful framework for identifying repeat offender, repeat victim, or repeat location problems.

See www.popcenter.org/about/?p=triangle for further detail.

* See Problem-Solving Tool Guides No. 4, *Analyzing Repeat Victimization*; No. 6, *Understanding Risky Facilities*; No. 11, *Analyzing and Responding to Repeat Offending; and No. 12, Understanding Theft of 'Hot' Products* for further information.

A diagram was produced to represent the hierarchical status and position of each [organized crime] group member. It was noted by police officers that the most influential family members were "reluctant to get their hands dirty." As such, a more detailed assessment was conducted of the number and types of convictions for each of the core members. As the Pareto principle (80/20 rule)* predicts, these 90 prior convictions were not randomly assigned in terms of offenders or types of offences. In fact one offender accounted for the most offences (39 percent) across the group and the three most involved offenders accounted for approximately two-thirds of the total crimes committed. One offender had no convictions or impending prosecutions.

Source: Durham Constabulary 2011

* Editor's note: The "80/20 rule" is a statistical rule of thumb that holds that approximately 20 percent of things account for about 80 percent of results. See *Crime Analysis for Problem Solvers In 60 Small Steps*, step 18, for further discussion of this rule in the crime prevention context.

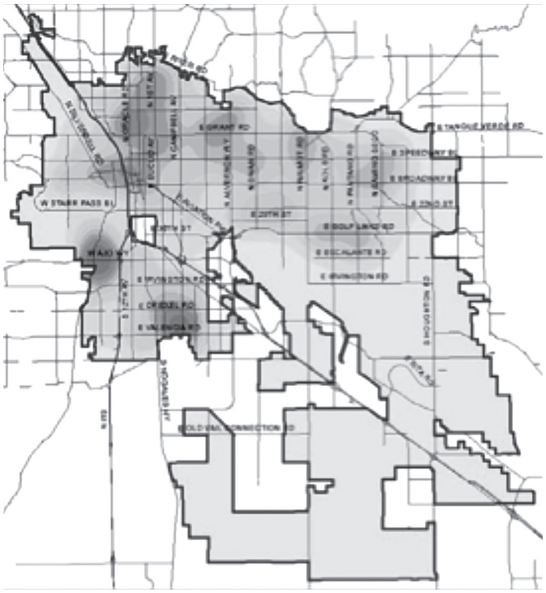
Mapping Incidents

Spatial mapping software facilitates mapping incident locations. At a minimum, this might allow you to spot potential problem locations simply by looking at the map to detect dense clusters of incidents. More sophisticated mapping software uses advanced mathematics to determine statistically significant incident clusters (or hot spots) that might indicate a problem at that location.* Use incident maps with care, though. Maps do not speak for themselves: apparent hot spots might not be all that unusual or they might reflect different, unrelated problems at a location.[3] Most importantly, not all policing problems cluster by location, so an incident cluster map might not be helpful at all in identifying problems involving similar behavior, time, or people, but which occur in different locations.† Problems such as child abuse or domestic violence, for example, might not cluster geographically.

* See Kaplan 2010 for further information.

† See Townsley and Pease 2002 for a detailed discussion of statistical analysis to identify "hot spots," "hot groups," and "hot times."

Figure 3. This map depicts areas with high numbers of reported burglaries in Tucson, Arizona.



Source: Tucson Police Department 2006

Crime mapping has been documented as being useful in identifying problems such as arson, residential burglary, traffic crashes, thefts from garages, and drug dealing.[4]

Canvassing People Knowledgeable About the Problem

Although most CAD and RMS records originate by citizens communicating to police that a troublesome situation exists, recognize that citizens quite often opt not to call police even when they notice or experience a troublesome situation, including some serious crimes. Only about half of violent crimes are reported to police and even fewer property crimes get reported.[5] Likewise, many hazardous conditions and nuisances are not reported to police and thus are not dispatched as calls for police service, yet citizens know about and are affected by them. Consequently, reviewing police records will never suffice for knowing about all of a community's problems.

Actively canvas various groups of people who are likely to have knowledge about public-safety problems, but whose knowledge might not be captured in official police records. Canvassing might be done on an informal or anecdotal basis, such as by attending community meetings and listening to citizens' concerns or interviewing key community members. Canvassing might also be done formally by administering methodologically sound surveys.*

* See *A Police Guide to Surveying Citizens and Their Environment Bureau of Justice Assistance* 1993 and *Conducting Community Surveys: A Practical Guide for Law Enforcement Agencies* Weisel 1999 for further information.

Community Members

Obviously, different community members are likely to have knowledge about different public-safety problems.* Community members and the types of public-safety problems about which they are likely to have knowledge include the following:

- *Residents:* problems that occur in public places near their residences such as disorderly youth, speeding vehicles, drug dealing in open-air markets or out of residences, loud parties or vehicles (but not problems that occur inside one another's residences such as child or elder abuse and neglect, domestic violence, or Internet crimes).
- *Merchants:* problems occurring in and around their businesses such as retail and employee theft, panhandling and other street disorder, or check and credit card fraud.
- *Tourists:* problems that directly affect them such as street robbery, thefts from hotel rooms, pick-pocketing, or prostitution.
- *Non-government organization staff:* problems pertaining to their organization's work such as domestic violence, child abuse, drug abuse, or mental illness. Hospital staff are an especially rich source of information about trends and patterns relating to assault, substance abuse, and accidental injury, much of which goes unreported to police.
- *School and church officials:* problems occurring in and around their facilities, or being experienced by their students/congregation members and staff, such as child or elder abuse and neglect, school bullying, gang activity, or assaults on staff.

* See Leigh, Read, and Tilley 1998; Eck and Spelman 1987; and Higdon and Huber 1987 for analyses of the various sources of information police used to identify problems and the type of problems typically reported by these various sources.

PALM BEACH COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE
RIC L. BRADSHAW, SHERIFF

The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office is requesting your input and ideas via this survey to assist us in addressing the concerns that you as residents may have in your community. All survey information will remain confidential and not be released to the general public but will be used to coordinate our plans in combating crime and concerns in your community.
Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

As a community, what are the biggest problems facing you today?
List top three:_____

_____

As an individual resident, what are your biggest concerns?
List top three:_____

_____

1.) Would you be willing to attend a community meeting? _____

2.) Would you be willing to be a part of the Citizen Observer Patrol?
Do you have children living in your house? _____ How many? _____
Do you own your home or are you renting? OWN_____ RENTING _____
Are your children involved in after school activities? _____ What? _____

3.) How safe do you feel in your community? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
How satisfied are you with the PBSO ? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
How would you rate the level of service? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

NAME:_____

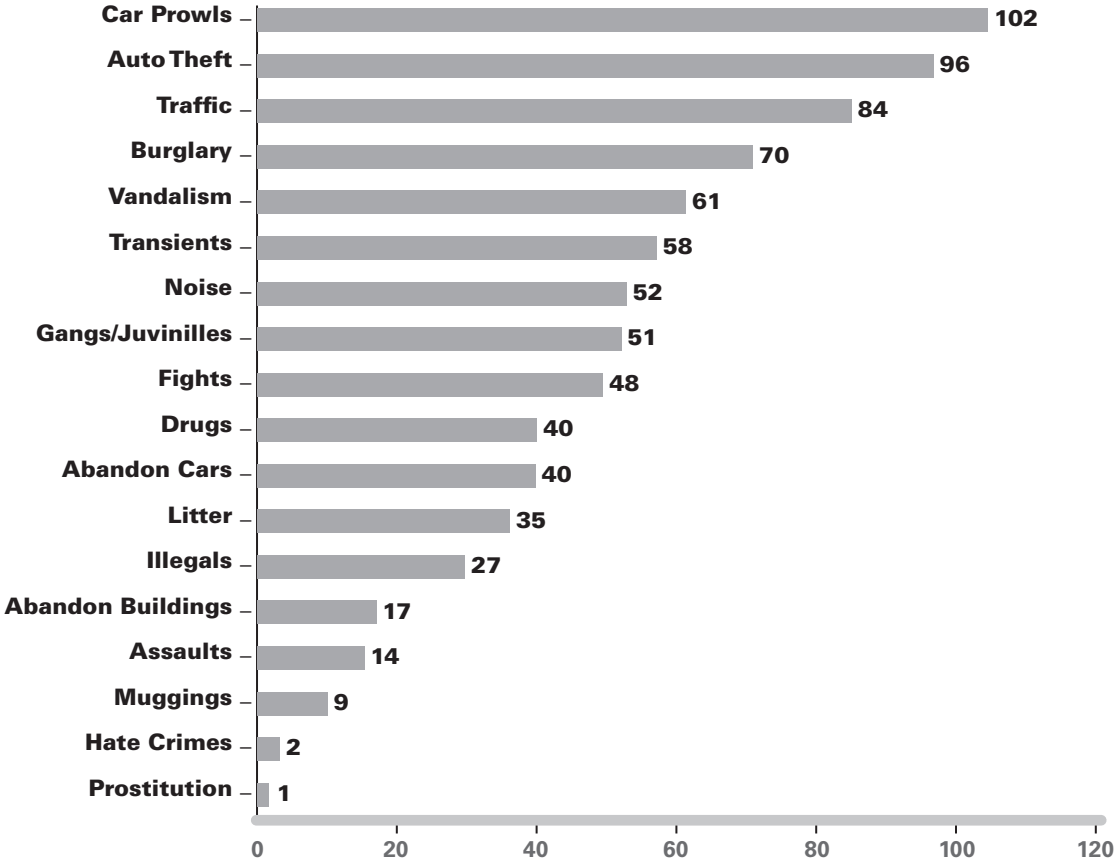
ADDRESS:_____

PHONE NUMBER:_____

3228 Gun Club Road ▪ West Palm Beach, Florida 33406-3001 ▪ (561) 688-3000 ▪ http://www.pbso.org

Source: Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office, "Plantation Mobile Home Park: A Snapshot of Success," Submission to the Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing (2009).

Figure 4. Community survey: big problems in the Clairemont neighborhood.



Source: San Diego Police Department, "VARDA Car," Submission to the Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing (1995).

Other Government Officials

Police regularly work with other government agencies to address public-safety problems, so it makes sense to also routinely confer with them to learn about emerging problems that might be more apparent to those agencies than to police. By way of example, parks departments might first learn of security concerns in public parks; child protective service agencies might first learn of child neglect or endangerment patterns; fire officials might learn about arson trends; public health officials might first learn about prostitution or drug-abuse problems; and so forth.

Elected government officials commonly receive complaints about chronic nuisances that citizens feel are either too trivial to justify calling the police or for which past responses to the nuisances have proven ineffective.

Some jurisdictions have formal systems for referring matters across different government agencies while other jurisdictions do so in less structured ways, such as via phone calls to the police chief's or district commander's office.

Police Line Personnel

Police line personnel—patrol officers, detectives, and civilian staff who deal directly with the public—are often among the first to discern patterns and trends from among their routine handling of incidents, cases, and service requests. Sometimes individuals bring to the attention of police managers emerging public-safety problems that beg for closer attention. But oftentimes, line personnel do not see it as their role or know how to apply that extra attention. If you are a police supervisor or manager, periodically reach out to line personnel—particularly those who work steady beats or neighborhoods—to ask what problems they are seeing and what priorities ought to be attached to addressing them as problems. As with the public, this canvassing can be done on an informal basis, such as through roll-call communications or hallway conversations, or on a more formal basis, such as through departmental surveys.

Crime Analysts, Police Records Staff, and Police Communications Staff

If your agency employs professional crime analysts, police records staff, or police communications staff, consult them regularly for any trends and patterns they discern while processing and analyzing police records. These support staff personnel should be trained to recognize behavior, person, place, and time patterns that might indicate the

presence of a chronic policing problem. Unless they are directly asked, many such support staff members might not bring trends and patterns they spot to the attention of operations personnel, perhaps assuming that operations personnel are already aware of them. Bear in mind that these support staff, free from the demands of responding to policing incidents, are in especially good positions to spot and reflect upon trends and patterns within the mass of police calls for service and reports.

Officials from Other Law Enforcement Agencies

Monitor the crime problems affecting other law enforcement agencies in your area. Police in neighboring jurisdictions might be experiencing problems that affect (or will affect) your jurisdiction, and a collaborative approach to addressing them might prove more effective than independent efforts. Likewise, state, university, school, or federal law enforcement agencies operating within your jurisdiction might also have useful information about problems that mutually affect your jurisdictions. School and university problems, for example, invariably affect both the school property and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Monitoring Mass Media Stories

Although it is unlikely that journalists will know about public-safety problems before police do, good investigative journalists often undertake substantial research into policing problems, research that can be of great value both in calling public and official attention to the problem and in documenting its scope, harm, and potential causes and contributing factors. Obviously, any police official can read the local newspaper and watch the local newscasts to learn about these news stories, but it is also helpful to develop a departmental routine for doing so and a system for referring such stories to the appropriate operations personnel for further inquiry.

Consider monitoring social media—such as Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr—as well as mainstream mass media outlets. Users may describe crime or disorder problems through these media that they have not otherwise reported to police.

Verifying That Problems Are Real and Warrant Police Attention

Many troublesome situations are presented to the police for resolution. As has been noted, not all such situations fit within the definition of a problem, as distinct from an incident or a pattern of incidents. But it is also the case that some perceived problems prove, upon closer examination, not to be real, or not to be serious. Gather factual data to help you verify whether a perceived problem is real and serious. The sections below describe common circumstances under which perceived real policing problems prove to be otherwise.

Inaccurate Perceptions

There's nothing wrong with citizens or police officers nominating a potential public-safety problem for special attention on the basis of anecdotal experiences or rough perceptions: those experiences and perceptions could be well-founded. It's important, however, that you be open to the possibility that they are not real, that they are not widely perceived to be problems, or that they are not as serious as first imagined. For example, people often overestimate the speed of vehicles, imploring police to enforce speed laws when drivers are not exceeding speed limits. The real problem might be speed limits that are set too high for conditions, or the problem might be unrealistic perceptions and exaggerated fears by complainants, but the problem would decidedly not be one of speeding vehicles. Similarly, some people fear that certain individuals—such as mentally ill people, transients, residents of half-way houses, or teenagers—threaten their safety, and accordingly want police to remove those individuals from the area, yet those fears are sometimes unfounded or exaggerated. Certain behaviors that some citizens find troublesome, such as political protest, loitering, noise, vulgarity or rudeness, or public begging or entertaining for money, might be lawful, even constitutionally protected, and thereby not constitute legitimate problems for police intervention. In such cases, the police role might be limited to explaining this to complainants. Some who complain to police about troublesome situations might imply or claim that their complaints are shared by many others in the community, when in fact they are not. In some cases, the complainant has a personal stake in getting police to address the troublesome situation, while there is no wider community stake in the situation.

Amorphous (or 'Fuzzy') Problems

Some problems are notoriously difficult to define precisely and accurately. Gang problems are often one such problem. Citizens and police alike can usually recognize when crime and disorder problems have some gang element to them, but the precise contribution that gang membership makes to the problem is often harder to determine. Defining problems as "gang problems" often implies that the solution is to be found in breaking up the gangs through some combination of punishment and re-socialization of gang members. But, the gang-relatedness of the gang members' harmful activities can vary considerably. For instance, assaults by one gang member against a member of another gang might be in furtherance of the gangs' purpose, or it might be a straightforward interpersonal conflict between two individuals who happen to be gang members. Moreover, in many youth gangs, a relatively small percentage of members are deeply committed to the gang, with others being more loosely affiliated. It is usually more productive for police to address the specific problems that are related to gangs in a community—the graffiti, witness intimidation, drive-by shootings, gun assaults, drug dealing, and other ancillary crimes committed by gang members.*

Normal Variation

Alternatively, some problems which might be real enough simply are not serious enough to warrant special police responses. Some crime incidents, while serious and alarming in their own right, generate exaggerated public concern about the likelihood of similar incidents occurring again. Consider applying statistical analyses of the frequency of incidents to inform your judgments about whether an incident or pattern of incidents ought to be defined and addressed as a problem. Statistical analysis can reveal the normal range of variation in the incidence of crime types, with the implication that the incidence

* See the cluster of gang-related *Problem-Oriented Guides for Police* at www.popcenter.org (sorting the listing of Problem-Specific Guides by "Category").

will randomly fluctuate up or down within that range regardless of any special action or inaction. Calculating that normal variation and then setting a threshold tolerance level is an objective method of determining when special police attention to the problem is warranted.*

Police discussions of "normal variation" in crime and disorder might, of course, not be especially well received by citizens, elected officials, or journalists not well-versed in statistics and who are concerned about a notorious crime or a sudden crime pattern. Here again is why it is important for you to know whether you are dealing with an incident, an incident pattern, or a problem. It might be necessary and appropriate to give some special police attention to a critical incident or to a pattern of incidents, if only to alleviate public fear and concern. But it might also be unwise to launch a full-blown problem-oriented policing project to address a situation that you deem to be within the parameters of normal variation.

Non-Police Problems

Some problems might be real, well-defined, serious, and chronic, and yet fall outside the broad, but not unlimited, police mandate. However troublesome these situations might be to the community, they might diverge from the realm of police expertise, capacity, or responsibility. The most that police might properly do is refer these problems to other government agencies, private entities, or non-government organizations to address.

As an illustration, police are often called upon to deal with school truancy problems. Unless truant students are committing crimes, causing public nuisances, or experiencing some form of victimization due to their being out of school, police might reasonably assert that they lack any policing interest in the problem, and thereby lack responsibility for addressing it. Even though there may be a legitimate *public* interest or *government* interest in controlling school truancy, it does not necessarily follow that there is a legitimate *police* interest in it.

Although police will not always be able to resist community or political pressure to address non-police problems, it will help your agency if you clearly articulate what are and are not legitimate policing interests. The statement of the major police responsibilities in the text box below is a useful starting point for identifying and articulating police interests in the wide range of community problems. Unless your agency learns to refuse to assume

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* See Clarke and Eck n.d. (Step 22, "Examine your data distributions") and Vellani 2010 (Step 25, "Ring the bell") for further detailed discussion of calculating normal variation.

responsibility for some community problems on principled grounds, you risk having your agency's resources drained, or credibility undermined, by attempting to solve all community problems. That said, if your agency is unable to resist community or political pressure to address a non-police problem, or if your agency has ample resources to take one on, a problem-solving approach has as much merit for addressing non-police problems as it does for addressing legitimate police problems.

Major Responsibilities of Police

- To prevent and control conduct threatening to life and property (including serious crime)
- To aid victims of criminal attack and protect individuals in danger of physical harm
- To protect constitutional guarantees, such as the right of free speech and assembly
- To facilitate the movement of people and vehicles
- To assist those who cannot care for themselves, including the intoxicated, the addicted, the mentally ill, the physically disabled, the elderly, and the young
- To resolve conflict between individuals, groups, or between citizens and their government
- To identify problems that have the potential for becoming more serious problems for individuals, the police, or the government
- To create and maintain a feeling of security in the community

Sources: American Bar Association 1980; Goldstein 1977.

Defining Problems with Specificity and Accuracy

As a general rule, the more specifically you define a problem, the greater is your likelihood of addressing it effectively. This is so because even seemingly similar problems usually vary in significant ways that affect what sorts of interventions are likely to be effective. For example, although all robbery problems have in common the fact that the activity is prohibited under the same robbery statute, there are obvious and significant differences among robbery problems. Street robbery, robbery around automated teller machines, highway robbery, taxicab robbery, delivery robbery, bank robbery, and convenience store robbery each occur in such different physical environments that the specific causes and effective prevention measures are likely to be quite different among these different problems.

Although, as is done in the list of common policing problems in Appendix A, problems can be described in shorthand terms, when seeking to tackle a real problem strive to define it in as complete and precise terms as possible, incorporating if possible the behavior, people, place, and time elements in the full problem description. As an illustration, rather than seeking to tackle an entire class of noise problems in a single initiative, San Marcos, Texas, police narrowed the problem to loud parties in an off-campus residential community, a considerably more coherent and manageable problem.[6]

Patterns from Which to Identify Problems

By definition, a policing problem comprises a cluster of incidents that are similar to one another in one or more ways. The four principal ways in which incidents might be similar are the following:

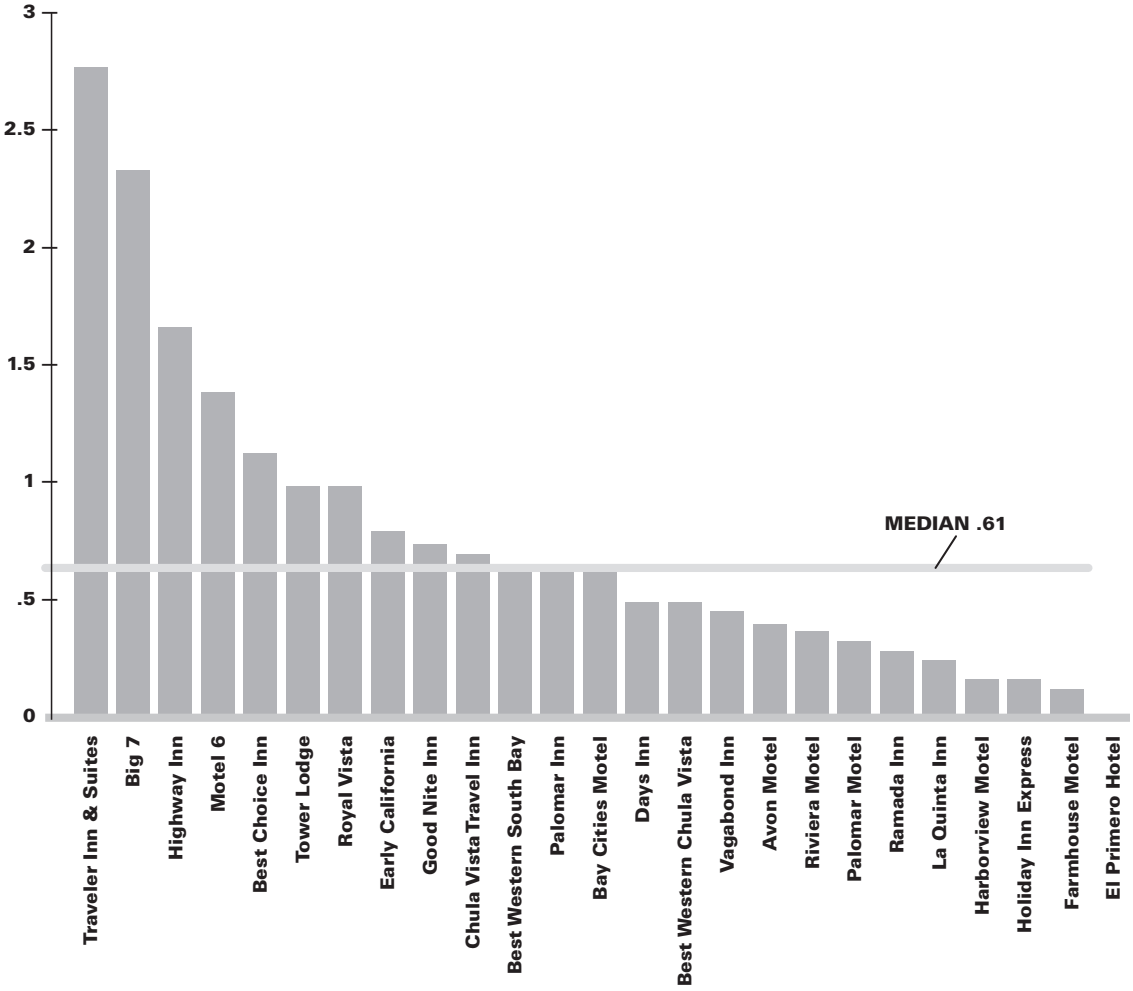
- *Behavior:* The troublesome conduct is of a similar nature. Sometimes, but not always, the description of that conduct mirrors criminal statutes or ordinances, such as burglary, assault, theft, making of excessive noise, drug dealing, speeding, etc.
- *People:* The troublesome conduct involves the same individuals repeatedly. They might be the same offenders, the same victims, the same complainants, or the same third-party facilitators. Common policing problems that tend to be defined primarily in terms of the people involved include: chronic inebriates, chronically mentally ill people, gangs, disorderly youth, transient people, chronic complainants, missing people, juvenile runaways, and repeat offenders and victims.

- *Places:* The troublesome conduct or conditions occur at the same places. These might be a particular residence, an apartment complex, a particular bar, an entertainment district, a street intersection, a public park, a particular business or type of business, or a particular motel. Place sizes can vary widely, from relatively small places such as one house; to intermediate-sized places such as a street block, a neighborhood, or a large park; to relatively large places such as a police district or an entire police jurisdiction. Some problems occur in the virtual space of the Internet (e.g., child pornography, sexual exploitation of children, fraud schemes, or computer hacking). Some problems occur along a route rather than in one stationary place, such as speeding vehicles or disorder on buses. Also keep in mind that the place where the troublesome conduct occurs might not be the only significant location relating to a particular problem. For some problems, places where offenders plan their activity or acquire tools needed for their offending, or places to which they seek refuge afterward are also important.
- *Time:* The troublesome conduct occurs at the same time of day, day of the week, day of the month, or day or season of the year. Times that tend to be associated with various policing problems are included in Table 1 and Figure 5.

Table 1. Common problems at various times

Time	Common Problems
Bar-closing time	fights, drunken driving
Rush hour	traffic congestion, aggressive driving
Beginning and end of the school day	traffic congestion, disorderly youth
Paydays	street robbery, drug dealing, prostitution
First or last days of the college school year	traffic congestion, alcohol-related disorder, acquaintance rape, student party riots
Holidays	U.S. Independence Day (fireworks complaints), Halloween (arson, vandalism), New Year's Eve (drunken driving, celebratory shooting), Christmas shopping season (thefts from vehicles and residential burglary)
Spring or winter break from schools and colleges	burglary of student apartments and dormitories, alcohol-related disorder

Figure 5. This frequency distribution chart is structured to make it easy to see which motels have statistically high police-call rates and are thereby deemed problematic.



Source: Chula Vista Police Department 2009.

Having laid out these four pattern types, understand that defining problems in terms of the people, places, or times involved is nearly always just a shorthand description of a problem that involves problematic behavior or hazardous conditions. Behavior should nearly always be at the core of any problem definition, whatever the shorthand label. A good rule of thumb is that every problem definition should include at least one verb, thereby focusing attention on some specific, problematic behavior. Describing problems as, for example, a "drug problem," a "homeless problem," a "park problem," or "a bar-time problem," might be useful shorthand for those intimately familiar with the problem, but it risks sounding too vague or too broad for those not familiar with the shorthand. Adding a behavioral word or phrase to the problem definition greatly clarifies matters, as for instance: a "drug trafficking problem," an "assaults of homeless people problem," a "sexual assault in a park problem," or a "drunken driving around bar-time problem."

To encourage even greater specificity, try also to include a place (or environment) descriptor in naming the problem. This is important because research and practice is increasingly showing how important the physical context of a problem is to its solution.[7] Adding the place descriptor further clarifies the nature of the problem, as for instance: a "drug trafficking in apartment complexes problem," an "assaults of homeless people in homeless encampments problem," and a "drunken driving around bar-time on highways problem."

In Enfield, we did not want to reduce this problem to a "gangs issue." Rather than target "gangs," we chose to look at individuals within these groups and decide on a case-by-case basis what would be the most suitable response to a particular individual in relation to their level of activity and involvement (particularly as not all "gang members" are criminally active). This would require a mixture of prevention, intervention, and enforcement targeted at gang members and their associates (who were both the victims and offenders).

Source: Enfield Safer & Stronger Communities Board 2011

This process of taking apart a general problem to understand its various specific forms is tremendously important toward effective problem solving. For example, understanding how one drug market differs from other drug markets helps in figuring out the necessary responses to each of them. Having gone through this de-aggregation process, however, it might make sense to then re-aggregate some problems if the discrete problems are similar enough that particular responses will effectively address multiple specific problems. For example, if one were to discover that thieves and burglars alike were selling their stolen goods in the same stolen-goods market, measures taken to disrupt that stolen-goods market could prove effective in controlling both the theft and burglary problems even if those theft and burglary problems were in many other respects quite different from one another.

Redefining Problems

As you make progress in analyzing a policing problem, it is a good idea at some point to consciously reflect on whether the problem ought to be redefined.[8] Consciously redefining a problem can open up entirely new approaches for addressing it. As an illustration, police in one community had defined a problem involving various forms of disorderly behavior on the street as being a problem of homeless offenders, in large measure because their analysis indicated that a high percentage of offenders engaged in disorderly public conduct were indeed without permanent residences. As police sought the assistance of homeless service providers in the community, they realized that the service providers resented the insinuation that all homeless people were disorderly, a fact that the service providers knew to be statistically untrue: in their experience, the overwhelming majority of homeless people were not habitually disorderly. Both the police and the service providers were largely correct when viewing the problem from their respective points of view. When the police consciously redefined the problem as one of chronic nuisance offenders—leaving homelessness out of the definition—doing so not only improved the cooperative relationship with the service providers, but it also helped police realize that the condition of being homeless was not, in fact, a significant contributing factor to street disorder: other factors, such as alcohol abuse, were far more significant and thereafter received greater focus in the problem-solving initiative.

Persuading Others to Give Problems Special Attention and to Apply Problem-Oriented Approaches

Although, as noted above, it makes sense to address policing problems in which there exists substantial community, political, and police department interest in doing so, it is equally true that you will probably need to make a persuasive argument to at least some key stakeholders that a particular policing problem warrants expending scarce police resources to analyze and address.

All systems—including the criminal justice system—are subject to the effects of inertia: the "resistance or disinclination to motion, action, or change." It is nearly always perceived to be easier to continue doing what has been done than to invent and adopt a new way of doing it. This is so not only for practical reasons—change requires extra effort—but for principled reasons as well: the current response to most policing problems serves the interests of at least some key stakeholders in the problem. That is, some key stakeholders are benefiting from the current response to the problem, even if police think that response is ineffective or inefficient. As an illustration, the conventional police response to gasoline drive-offs is to have a police officer investigate and record all reported gasoline drive-offs, and make some effort to identify the thief and either compel payment or prepare a criminal case for prosecution. Police usually find this response to be both ineffective in preventing gasoline drive-offs and an inefficient use of scarce criminal justice resources. But the owners of gasoline service stations, many of which double as convenience stores, prefer this police response to one in which they require customers to pay for their gasoline before pumping it because the pay-first approach undermines customers' impulse buying of other goods in the store, on which purchases the store's profits heavily depend.*

Mounting an argument for addressing a policing problem in a new way is principally about contrasting the harms and costs to the community of the current state of affairs with the harms and costs in a projected future state of affairs such that key stakeholders concur that the current state of affairs is no longer tolerable given future prospects.

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* See Problem-Specific Guide No. 67, *Gasoline Drive-offs*, for further information.

Developing the argument for improving the current response entails the following:

- Calculating and documenting the various types of harm the problem is creating
- Determining the various interests at stake
- Demonstrating the likely benefits of a new response to the problem in which the responsibilities and costs for addressing it are likely to be rearranged

Calculating and Documenting Harm

Each policing problem generates its own specific harms, but consider whether the specific problem you are addressing is also generating any of the following general types of harm:

- Financial loss to victims or insurers from stolen or damaged property
- Medical costs to victims and insurers for healing personal injury
- Lost wages and productivity from victims unable to work due to their victimization
- Lost tax revenues due to declining property values, or declining or unreported commercial sales
- Increased tax rates to pay for higher criminal justice system costs (including police) to respond to the problem (alternatively, even if criminal justice system costs do not increase, there will likely be so-called opportunity costs of having police and other criminal justice system officials deal with this problem rather than other problems)
- Increased insurance premiums to offset losses attributable to crimes or accidental injuries
- Psychological harm due to victimization (e.g., stress, anger, fear, and trauma from experiencing or witnessing violence or experience a violation of one's person or property, annoyance and frustration from nuisance sounds, sights, smells, and conduct)
- Diminishment of the reputation of a community attributable to crime and disorder

Not all harms generated by a policing problem are readily apparent; look to reveal harms that might otherwise be overlooked. Try to quantify all harms and specify who is experiencing the harms, both directly and indirectly.

Keep in mind that the calculations of harm that the problem is causing currently will serve as baseline measures for evaluating the effectiveness of your responses to the problem later on.

Prioritizing Problems

It's hard to know how many public-safety problems exist in any community at a particular time because defining a problem is largely a matter of judgment. But it is probably safe to say that most police agencies lack the resources to simultaneously address all existing public-safety problems in the thorough fashion that problem-oriented policing contemplates. So your agency will likely need to prioritize from among the various problems that warrant special attention.

If your agency employs processes that routinely identify multiple policing problems, and there is need to prioritize from among them, you should consider, at a minimum, the following factors in setting priorities:

Impact of the Problem on the Community

Most important, consider the impact that each problem is having on the community in at least the following ways:

- Take account of the *severity of the harm*: problems that are causing death or serious bodily injury to citizens should take precedence over those that are generating only minor annoyance
- Consider the *frequency of incidents* being generated by the problem: problems generating hundreds or thousands of incidents per year should take precedence over those generating only a few dozen
- Consider also the *level of fear* in the community that the problem is generating: fear does not always manifest itself in a call for police service, meaning that fear could be high even if the volume of incidents is not*
- Account for the *financial costs* attributable to each problem, including the costs of repairing the direct harm (repairing damaged property, replacing stolen goods, healing medical injuries, etc.), the costs of community fear (e.g., lost commerce from fearful shoppers, or lost tax revenue from reduced commerce and reduced property values), and the costs of the community response to the problem (e.g., police costs to respond to incidents, other criminal justice system costs to process cases, and other government agency costs to respond to incidents)

* See Reducing Fear of Crime: Strategies for Police, Cordner 2010, for further information.

Police Department Interest in Addressing Particular Problems

Gauge what level of interest exists within your police agency for addressing the various problems identified. Below is a discussion of how police interests in problems can be calculated and articulated, but regardless of what interest your police agency ought to have in a problem, it is worth taking into consideration what problems people in the agency actually are interested in seeing addressed. Organizational interest in problems is influenced by a range of factors, including whether political pressure exists to motivate agency leaders to address a problem, a particular individual in the agency has taken a special professional interest in a problem, and the degree of aggravation officers feel about the current way in which a problem is being addressed (e.g., officers' sense that the current response is futile, excessively time-consuming, unsafe to officers, or creating too much "paperwork" for them). Effective problem-oriented policing projects invariably require strong leadership, a critical aspect of which is persistence in seeing the project through to a satisfactory conclusion: a deep and genuine interest in addressing the problem fosters that persistence.

> **The problem** of the drinking-driver was selected for study primarily because it was the almost unanimous choice of police officers from whom we solicited suggestions. They expressed great concern about the seriousness of the problem, the demands that it makes on police time, and the sense of futility in dealing with it.
>
> Source: Goldstein and Susmilch 1982a, p. 14.

Prospects for Success

In the end, it makes sense to prioritize work on problems for which there is a reasonable likelihood of having some success in the short term. Making this judgment entails predicting whether:

- There is sufficient community interest in addressing the problem
- There are adequate resources available to analyze and respond to the problem
- There exists a sufficient amount of general knowledge about how best to address the problem
- There are few major political obstacles to adopting effective responses to the problem

Likelihood That the Problem Will Resolve Itself Soon

As noted earlier, one element of the very definition of a policing problem is that it is unlikely to abate without special police intervention. There are some public-safety problems that are serious and prevalent enough to warrant addressing with a problem-oriented approach, but which might well be abated in the near future even without special police intervention. As an illustration, a traffic-congestion or traffic-crash problem might soon be abated as a result of a major roadway improvement project scheduled for the near future. Or a widespread problem relating to theft or fraudulent cashing of payroll or government-benefit checks might soon be abated by a forthcoming plan to have payroll checks directly deposited into recipients' bank accounts. The judgment to be made is whether the expenditure of police resources in the present exceeds the expected additional community harm from the problem in the period before the new, more effective fix is complete. Here again, proper statistical analysis can inform your judgment: understanding the normal historical variation in the problem can allow you to make reasonable predictions as to whether the troublesome situation is merely at a normal high fluctuation and will reduce without any special intervention (what statisticians refer to as "regressing to the mean").

Determining the Appropriate Level of Aggregation at Which to Examine and Address the Problem

Having identified a public-safety problem, you will need to make an important judgment at what level of aggregation the problem is best addressed. For instance, imagine that crime analysis detects an abnormally high number of burglaries reported in one large apartment complex in a large city, and further analysis confirms that this is indeed a significant problem (and not just a short-term pattern of burglary incidents). At some point, a decisio n must be made whether to analyze and address the burglary problem only in this apartment complex, treating it as a highly localized problem; or in other apartment complexes in that police district experiencing high burglary rates, treating it as an intermediate-sized problem; or in apartment complexes across the entire jurisdiction experiencing high burglary rates, treating it as large, jurisdictional problem.*

Alternatively or additionally, the choice might be whether to limit the scope of the inquiry to apartment-complex burglaries or to expand it to include all apartment burglaries, all residential burglaries, or all burglaries, in whichever geographical area is selected for inquiry. Many policing problems could be either expanded or contracted in scope across any or all of the four major dimensions of problems (behavior, people, location, and time). That is, problems could be expanded to incorporate more than one type of troublesome behavior, more than one group of people affected, more than one location, or more than one time period.

One can easily think of problems as coming in three sizes—small, medium, and large (or beat-size, intermediate-size, and jurisdiction-size)—but, in fact, they can be aggregated in more than three sizes. Imagine the possibilities in a large metropolitan jurisdiction such

* There is some debate among scholars as to whether highly localized problem solving—such as addressing repeat calls for police service at a single house or business—really constitutes problem-oriented policing at all, but for practical purposes, it doesn't much matter: police should apply problem-solving principles and methods to any recurring policing problem, regardless of its scope or severity. The important point is that you shouldn't limit your agency to only addressing small, highly localized problems; problem-oriented policing can and should also have more ambitious aims to address classes of larger, serious, and complex problems.

as New York City. Problems could conceivably be addressed at the address-level, block-level, neighborhood-level, precinct-level, borough-level, city-level, or even at the extra-jurisdictional level (as the New York City Police Department has done in addressing its terrorism problem).

In making this judgment as to the appropriate level of aggregation at which to analyze and address the problem, there are two main considerations: 1) the similarity of problems across behavior, people, location, and time; and 2) the level of resources available to conduct the analysis and respond to the problem.

Similarity of Problems

Some policing problems are highly contextual, especially as to the physical environment in which they occur, and therefore usually require quite different responses, customized to the particular setting. Drug- and prostitution-market problems often are like this: the specific layout and operation of each market differs enough across markets that they are best addressed separately. For these kinds of problems it probably does not make sense to aggregate specific problems into a single larger problem. Other problems are less dependent on the particular setting in which they occur. Family-violence problems often are like this: the violence occurs in a variety of physical settings, so it makes sense to address family-violence problems across an entire jurisdiction, if possible. That said, there can be variations of family violence problems—such as family violence among certain cultural groups that differ substantially from the predominant culture—that warrant separate treatment.

Be open to the possibility that some seemingly disparate problems are actually similar enough to warrant addressing simultaneously. For example, a range of troublesome activity in which offenders need to drive around an area in order to engage in the illegal activity—drug dealing, street prostitution, cruising, drive-by shootings—might all be controlled by altering the traffic patterns and rules to make it more difficult for offenders to engage in the activity.

Availability of Resources

Even though problem solving holds the potential to reduce the expenditure of police and community resources in the long term, it usually requires an up-front investment of resources to realize those later benefits. The most important resources necessary for effective problem solving are time, information, expertise, and authority.

Time

Analyzing and responding to problems does take time; how much obviously depends upon the nature and complexity of the problem. But however much total time is required, in nearly all cases, police will require some uninterrupted blocks of time that they can dedicate to accomplishing specific problem-solving tasks. In the normal course of police patrol work, finding such uninterrupted blocks of time is difficult because urgent incidents pull officers away somewhat unpredictably. This means that patrol supervisors and managers must find ways to manage their patrol resources such that officers can accomplish problem-solving tasks without undue interruptions. There are a variety of ways to do so without compromising the public's safety, but most require some supervisory or managerial authorization.* Police supervisors should acknowledge that officers working on problems that do not call for intensive law enforcement activity might then not produce the level of arrests or citations that are ordinarily expected of them.

Information

For some policing problems a great deal of the information police might need in order to analyze the problem is contained within police records systems and other criminal-justice system records systems which are readily accessible to police. For other policing problems much of the important information is contained within records systems which are not readily accessible to police, such as records kept by hospitals and other medical and psychological service providers, insurance companies, banks and other financial institutions, corporations and their loss-prevention branches, and social-service providers. The difficulty of accessing some of this information might be too great to justify the effort if one is working on a highly localized problem that affects only a few people or places. Yet other types of information are not accessible anywhere: police need to generate the information anew, such as is often the case in systematically gathering opinions from a large number of citizens.

The other type of information important to police problem solving is research knowledge and other police agencies' experiences about effective methods of addressing public-safety problems. For some policing problems, there is a fair amount of reliable information available that can and should inform how your agency addresses a problem. For other policing problems, there is little research or police experience available to guide and

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* See Scott and Kirby 2012, "Manage officers' time to facilitate problem-solving" Section 18; Goldstein 1990, "Managing the Use of Time" pp. 151–52; and Townsley, Johnson, and Pease 2003, for further information.

inform local practice. The Center for Problem-Oriented Policing website is designed to facilitate your finding this type of information, but obviously it won't contain every bit of information you might want.*

Expertise

Beyond the data and knowledge discussed above, problem solving requires various skills, most especially those related to research sources, research methodology, statistics, project management, and public speaking and audio-visual presentations.† If those skills aren't possessed by police agency staff, consider retaining outside expertise (such as research expertise from a local university).‡

Authority

Authority is essential to various aspects of police problem solving. It is necessary that police have some authority over the subject matter of the attendant problem. For example, police clearly have authority over crime and disorder matters, but only shared authority over traffic-related matters and school-safety matters, and rather limited authority over religious, medical, and political matters. Authority is also required to allocate the time and other resources needed for problem-solving activity. Line personnel often lack this unilateral authority and must secure it from their supervisors and managers. Authority is required to access certain kinds of information. Even within police records, authority to access juvenile records is restricted. Police authority to access medical, educational, business, and many other government records is likewise restricted, requiring police to obtain that authority either from those who control the records or from a court authority.

Having worked through all of the issues discussed in this guidebook in identifying and defining policing problems, the final task in the Scanning phase of the SARA problem-solving model is to decide who will assume primary responsibility for carrying the work forward to its next phase—problem analysis.

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* See Problem-Solving Tool Guide No. 2, Researching a Problem, for further information.

† See Clarke and Eck n.d. for further information.

‡ See Goldstein and Susmilch 1982b, pp. 51-62, and Kennedy 1999 for further discussions of the police-researcher relationship in a problem-oriented policing framework.

Conclusion

The police profession has only just begun the painstaking process of identifying, classifying, and diagnosing the many substantive problems that constitute its core business.[9] Police agencies are likewise developing and enhancing their capacity to identify chronic problems in a timely fashion, rigorously analyze them to understand their causes, and develop customized responses to each local problem. This process will mature and become more sophisticated over time.

Although there is a heavy scientific and analytic element to police-problem identification and definition, there is also a political and subjective element to them. How policing problems are defined necessarily entails judgment. A judgment must be made as to when a level of crime or disorder has become so intolerable that a wholly new approach to addressing the problem needs to be considered. Because so many policing problems entail conflicting opinions within the community about what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behavior, when a problem is defined, it often prioritizes one group's desires and interests over those of other groups. Merely acknowledging the subjective element of problem identification and definition should prompt decision-makers to carefully consider the core community, government, and police values that will inform which community problems receive careful police attention and how those problems are defined in terms of the conflicting interests at stake. To every extent possible, the process of identifying and defining policing problems should be open and transparent, taking account of the full range of interests at stake. In sum, rigorous statistical analysis to identify policing problems should be complemented by careful and wise judgments about how to define them.

Appendix A: Problems Commonly Addressed by Police

The list below roughly maps the known universe of policing problems. It represents but one approach to describing common policing problems. It is not intended to be exhaustive: no list could be because new policing problems constantly arise while others are eliminated as law and technology evolves. Alternative terminology, inclusion of additional rare problems, and different ways of aggregating problems would alter such a listing.

Most problems on this list are defined primarily by the behavior (e.g., assault, carjacking, or drug trafficking), but others are defined primarily by the people involved (e.g., day laborers, gangs, or transients), the location of the problem (e.g., abandoned buildings, drug houses), or the time at which the problem occurs (e.g., problems during student parties or festivals, problems around bar closing times, or traffic congestion during rush hour). Many problems can be defined by a combination of behavior, people, location, and time (e.g., assaults by and of college students in and around bars on weekend nights).

1. Abandoned and recovered personal property
2. Abandoned children
3. Abandoned/derelict vehicles
4. Abandoned/derelict/unsafe buildings
5. Accidental drowning
6. Accidental shootings
7. Age-impaired driving
8. Aggressive/reckless bicycling/skateboarding
9. Aggressive/reckless boating
10. Aggressive/reckless driving
11. Animal cruelty (including animal fighting)
12. Animal endangerment
13. Animal waste
14. Animals endangering humans
15. Arson by juveniles for thrills (juvenile firesetting)
16. Arson for profit
17. Arson to conceal evidence of other crimes
18. Assault of strangers (e.g., flash mobs)
19. Assault of transportation-system passengers and staff
20. Assaults in and around bars
21. Assaults in institutions (jails, group homes, hospitals, schools)
22. Assaults in workplaces
23. Auto theft for export across land borders

24. Auto theft for export through seaports
25. Auto theft for parts (chop shops)
26. Auto theft for thrills or temporary transportation (joyriding)
27. Auto theft from car dealerships and rental agencies
28. Auto theft from parking facilities
29. Auto theft from streets and driveways
30. Bombs and bomb threats
31. Bullying in schools
32. Burglary of commercial establishments (including smash-and-grab burglaries)
33. Burglary of open/unlocked garages
34. Burglary of residences
35. Burglary of school and recreation buildings
36. Burglary of storage facilities
37. Carjacking
38. Child custody disputes
39. Child fatalities (including shaken baby deaths, abandonment in hot vehicles, sleeping rollover deaths, and Munchhausen by proxy syndrome)
40. Child neglect and abuse in institutions (correctional facilities, churches, youth organizations, group homes, foster care)
41. Child neglect and abuse in the home
42. Child pornography
43. Chronic public inebriation
44. Clandestine drug labs
45. Computer hacking
46. Corruption of public officials
47. Crowd disorder and violence during festivals, concerts, sporting events, political demonstrations, and labor-management conflicts
48. Cruising
49. Currency counterfeiting
50. Dignitary and celebrity protection
51. Disorder at day laborer sites
52. Disorderly conduct in public libraries
53. Disorderly conduct on transportation vehicles and stations
54. Disorderly youth in public places
55. Domestic disputes
56. Domestic violence
57. Drive-by shootings
58. Drug houses/shooting galleries
59. Drug trafficking across borders
60. Drug trafficking in apartment complexes

61. Drug trafficking in motels
62. Drug trafficking in open-air markets
63. Drug trafficking in or near schools
64. Drug trafficking via cell phones and vehicles
65. Drug-impaired driving
66. Drunken and disorderly conduct
67. Drunken boating
68. Drunken driving
69. Elder abuse (financial)
70. Elder abuse (physical and emotional)
71. Embezzlement
72. Endangerment by alcohol/ drug intoxication
73. Endangerment by medical condition (e.g., epilepsy, mental illness)
74. Exploitation of trafficked people for labor
75. Exploitation of trafficked people for sex
76. Exposure of children to hazardous materials
77. Extortion
78. Failure to pay for food/hotel services
79. False intrusion alarms
80. False reporting of crime (e.g., theft, sexual assault, arson)
81. Fare beating (turnstile jumping)
82. Fear of crime
83. Fencing stolen property
84. Fighting (mutual combat)
85. Food and drug contamination (intentional)
86. Forgery
87. Fraudulent insurance claims (auto and property)
88. Fraudulent mortgages
89. Fraudulent receipt or use of government benefits (e.g., Social Security, food stamps, welfare, worker's compensation)
90. Fraudulent return of retail merchandise
91. Fraudulent schemes (including telemarketing fraud)
92. Fraudulent use of another's identity (identity theft)
93. Fraudulent use of checks and credit cards
94. Fraudulent creation and use of documents (e.g., identification, immigration documents)

95. Fraudulent use of long distance calling cards/numbers
96. Gambling in organized illegal rackets
97. Gambling in public places
98. Gang initiation crimes
99. Gang versus gang violence
100. Graffiti
101. Hate crimes (harassment and assault)
102. Hazardous and illegal waste dumping
103. Hazardous loads spilling onto highway
104. Hazardous materials (including broken glass, syringes)
105. Hazardous materials scares (e.g., Anthrax)
106. Hazardous parking
107. Hijacking of delivery trucks
108. Hostage taking
109. House parties
110. Illegal street vending (squeegee operations, peddling)
111. Illegal vehicle towing operations
112. Impersonating police officers
113. Inattentive driving (e.g., use of electronic devices while driving)
114. Indecent exposure by females (e.g., exposing breasts during public celebrations)
115. Indecent exposure by males (e.g., exposing genitals in public)
116. Juvenile runaways (from single-family and group homes)
117. Kidnapping for ransom
118. Kidnapping for sex slavery
119. Kidnapping of children by parents in custody disputes
120. Kidnapping of infants
121. Landlord-tenant disputes
122. Loitering in public places
123. Marijuana cultivation in indoor grow houses
124. Marijuana cultivation on outdoor public and private land
125. Mass evacuation of civilians during emergencies
126. Mass shootings
127. Missing people (including walkaways from institutions)
128. Misuse and abuse of 911
129. Murder (domestic)

130. Murder of public figures (assassination)
131. Murder of serial victims (e.g., prostitutes)
132. Neighbor disputes
133. Noise from alarms (including building and vehicle alarms)
134. Noise from animals (e.g., barking dogs)
135. Noise from car stereos
136. Noise from industrial/commercial sources (e.g., trains, nightclubs)
137. Noise from motor vehicles (engines and exhaust systems)
138. Noise from people in entertainment districts
139. Obscene phone calls
140. Offensive odors
141. Organized crime
142. Panhandling
143. Parking in handicapped spaces
144. Pedestrian injuries/fatalities
145. Prescription-drug fraud and abuse
146. Prostitution in indoor locations (call girls, escort services, massage parlors, brothels, motels)
147. Prostitution in outdoor locations (street prostitution)
148. Prostitution via organized child sex rings
149. Protection of controversial speakers
150. Public bathing, urinating, and defecating
151. Purse snatching
152. Pushing people into paths of trains
153. Robbery at automated teller machines
154. Robbery by home invasion
155. Robbery of banks
156. Robbery of convenience stores/service stations/fast-food restaurants
157. Robbery of delivery people
158. Robbery of drug dealers/buyers
159. Robbery of fraudulently-induced victims (e.g., vehicle buyers)
160. Robbery of pharmacies
161. Robbery of prostitution clients
162. Robbery of schoolchildren
163. Robbery of taxicab drivers
164. Robbery of tourists
165. Robbery on streets (mugging)

166. Sex with animals
167. Sex with corpses (necrophilia)
168. Sexual activity in public places
169. Sexual abuse of children
170. Sexual abuse of developmentally disabled people
171. Sexual assault by acquaintances
172. Sexual assault by illegal touching (groping)
173. Sexual assault by strangers
174. Sexual relations by an adult with a minor
175. Shooting firearms as celebration
176. Sleep-deprived driving
177. Speeding in residential areas
178. Speeding in school zones
179. Speeding on highways
180. Stalking (including cyberstalking)
181. Street racing
182. Suicides
183. Target shooting near occupied dwellings
184. Terrorism
185. Theft by employees
186. Theft from autos in parking facilities
187. Theft from autos on streets and driveways
188. Theft from construction sites
189. Theft from hotel/motel rooms
190. Theft from laundry/vending machines
191. Theft from people (pickpocketing)
192. Theft from retail establishments (shoplifting)
193. Theft from yards
194. Theft of art and artifacts
195. Theft of auto parts (e.g., hubcaps, license plates/stickers)
196. Theft of bicycles
197. Theft of cargo from trains, trucks, ships, and shipping containers
198. Theft of customers' personal property from cafés and bars
199. Theft of gasoline by drive-off
200. Theft of grease (for resale in manufacture of biofuel)
201. Theft/burglary of human hair (for wigs)
202. Theft of library books

203. Theft of livestock
204. Theft of mail
205. Theft of rare/valuable plants (e.g., ginseng)
206. Theft of scrap metals
207. Theft of utilities (water, gas, electricity, cable TV)
208. Ticket scalping
209. Toy guns
210. Traffic congestion around schools
211. Traffic congestion at special events
212. Traffic congestion on roads during rush hours
213. Traffic congestion in entertainment districts
214. Traffic control at emergency rescue scenes (e.g., vehicle crashes, fires)
215. Traffic crashes in which drivers flee the scene (hit-and-run crashes)
216. Traffic crashes involving bicycles
217. Traffic crashes involving cars and trucks
218. Traffic crashes involving motorcycles
219. Traffic crashes with animals
220. Traffic crashes with trains
221. Traffic signal violations (e.g., running red lights and stop signs)
222. Trafficking in human body parts
223. Train derailments
224. Transient encampments
225. Trash scavenging
226. Unauthorized parking on private property
227. Underage drinking
228. Unlicensed driving
229. Vandalism in cemeteries
230. Vandalism in parks
231. Vandalism of schools
232. Vandalism on transportation vehicles, routes, and stations
233. Vehicle lockouts
234. Victimization and accidental injury of transient people
235. Weapons in schools
236. Weapons trafficking (illegal)
237. Window peeping (prowlers)
238. Witness intimidation

Appendix B: Problems Commonly Addressed by Police, by Behavioral Type and Environment

An alternative classification scheme is the one below in Table B1 developed by Eck and Clarke (2003), with the minor modification of adding cyberspace as a twelfth environment (which Eck and Clarke would deem a "systems" environment). This classification scheme emphasizes two of the four major policing problem patterns—the type of behavior and the type of environment (or place) implicated in the problem. By filling in Eck and Clarke's two-dimensional scheme with the listing of problems from Appendix A, it becomes easier to see how specific problems are distributed across these 84 behavior-environment clusters. Acknowledging that the list of specific problems is probably not complete and that classifying problems by behavior type entails some judgment, one can readily see that some behavior-environment clusters contain many specific problems, others few, and yet others none. Some specific problems fit well within multiple clusters because they occur in multiple environments and/or they occur as a result of multiple behavioral motivations.

Table B1. Behaviors and environments

	Behaviors						
Environments	**Predatory (A)**	**Consensual (B)**	**Inter-personal Conflict (C)**	**Incivilities (D)**	**Endanger-ment (E)**	**Protest and Political Action (F)**	**Misuse of Police (G)**
Residential (1)	1A	1B	1C	1D	1E	1F	1G
Recreational (2)	2A	2B	2C	2D	2E	2F	2G
Offices (3)	3A	3B	3C	3D	3E	3F	3G
Retail (4)	4A	4B	4C	4D	4E	4F	4G
Industrial (5)	5A	5B	5C	5D	5E	5F	5G
Agricultural (6)	6A	6B	6C	6D	6E	6F	6G
Educational (7)	7A	7B	7C	7D	7E	7F	7G
Human Service (8)	8A	8B	8C	8D	8E	8F	8G
Public Ways (9)	9A	9B	9C	9D	9E	9F	9G
Transport (10)	10A	10B	10C	10D	10E	10F	10G
Open/ Transitional (11)	11A	11B	11C	11D	11E	11F	11G
Cyberspace (12)	12A	12B	12C	12D	12E	12F	12G

Cell 1A (Residential Predatory) = Abandoned children; Auto theft from driveways and garages; Burglary of residences, sheds and garages; Domestic violence; Elder abuse in the home (physical, emotional, financial); Exploitation of trafficked people for sex; Extortion; Failure to pay for hotel services; Fraudulent schemes; Hate crimes; Kidnapping for ransom; Kidnapping for sex slavery; Kidnapping of children by parents in custody disputes; Kidnapping of infants; Murder (domestic); Murder of serial victims in the home; Robbery by home invasion; Robbery of fraudulently-induced victims; Robbery of prostitution clients in hotels/motels; Sexual abuse of children in the home; Sexual abuse of developmentally disabled people in the home; Sexual assault by acquaintances; Sexual assault by strangers in the home; Theft from autos in driveways; Theft from hotel/motel rooms; Theft from laundry/vending machines in multi-family dwellings; Theft from yards; Theft of mail; Theft of scrap metal from homes; Theft of utilities (water, gas, electricity, cable TV)

Cell 2A (Recreational Predatory) = Assaults in and around bars; Gambling in parks; Theft of art and artifacts from museums; Theft of metal urns from cemeteries; Vandalism in cemeteries; Vandalism in parks

Cell 3A (Offices Predatory) = Assaults in workplaces; Burglary of offices; Currency counterfeiting; Embezzlement; Extortion; Forgery; Fraudulent creation and use of documents; Fraudulent mortgages; Fraudulent receipt or use of government benefits; Hostage taking; Mass shootings; Prescription-drug fraud

Cell 4A (Retail Predatory) = Auto theft from car dealerships and rental agencies; Burglary of retail establishments; Embezzlement; Extortion; Forgery; Failure to pay for food; Fencing stolen property in pawn shops; Food and drug contamination (intentional); Fraudulent return of retail merchandise; Fraudulent use of checks and credit cards in retail establishments; Fraudulent use of government benefits (food stamps); Hostage taking during robberies; Issuance of worthless checks; Mass shootings; Passing counterfeit money; Robbery at automated teller machines; Robbery of banks; Robbery of convenience stores/service stations/fast-food restaurants; Robbery of pharmacies; Theft from retail establishments by customers (shoplifting); Theft from retail establishments by employees; Theft from laundry/vending machines in retail establishments; Theft of customers' personal property from cafés and bars; Theft of food grease for sale as biofuel; Theft of gasoline by drive-off; Theft/burglary of human hair (for wigs) from beauty parlors; Theft of purses and bags

Cell 5A (Industrial Predatory) = Auto theft for export through seaports; Burglary of warehouses, factories and storage facilities; Exploitation of trafficked people for labor; Mass shootings; Theft of scrap metal from industrial businesses

Cell 6A (Agricultural Predatory) = Theft of livestock; Theft of chemicals (for use in clandestine drug labs); Theft of rare/valuable plants (e.g., ginseng)

Cell 7A (Educational Predatory) = Assaults in schools; Bullying in schools; Burglary of schools; Mass shootings; Robbery of schoolchildren; Theft of computers from libraries; Theft of library books; Vandalism of schools

Cell 8A (Human Service Predatory) = Abuse and neglect of group home residents; Assaults of staff in group homes; Child neglect and abuse in childcare facilities; Elder abuse (physical, emotional, financial) in care facilities; Juvenile runaways from group homes; Kidnapping of infants from hospitals, daycare facilities; Sexual abuse of children in care facilities; Sexual abuse of developmentally disabled people in care facilities

Cell 9A (Public Ways Predatory) = Assaults in and around bars; Assaults of strangers (flash mobs); Auto theft from parking facilities; Auto theft from streets; Auto theft for export across land borders; Carjacking; Drive-by shootings; Hate crimes; Hijacking delivery trucks; Impersonating police officers; Murder of public figures (assassination); Purse snatching; Robbery at automated teller machines; Robbery of prostitution clients on streets and in vehicles; Robbery of delivery people; Robbery of drug dealers/buyers; Robbery of taxicab drivers; Robbery on streets (including of tourists); Sexual assault by illegal touching/groping; Sexual assault by strangers in public places; Terrorist attacks in public places; Theft from autos on streets and in parking facilities; Theft from people (pickpocketing); Theft of auto parts; Theft of bicycles

Cell 10A (Transport Predatory) = Assault of transportation-system passengers and staff; Child abandonment in hot vehicles; Fare beating; Robbery of taxicab drivers; Theft from people (pickpocketing) on trains and buses; Theft of cargo from trains, trucks, ships, and shipping containers; Theft of metal from railroad lines; Vandalism of transportation vehicles, routes, and stations

Cell 11A (Open/Transitional Predatory) = Theft of livestock; Murder of serial victims in public places; Theft from construction sites; ; Victimization of transient people

Cell 12A (Cyberspace Predatory) = Child pornography on the Internet; Cyberstalking; Computer hacking; Credit card fraud on the Internet; Fraudulent schemes (telemarketing); Fraudulent use of another's identity on the Internet; Fraudulent use of long distance calling cards/numbers; Trafficking in human body parts

Cell 1B (Residential Consensual) = Drug trafficking in private houses, multi-family dwellings, and hotels/motels; Fencing stolen property; Marijuana cultivation in residences; Prostitution in hotels/motels and private residences (escort services); Prostitution via organized child sex rings

Cell 2B (Recreational Consensual) = Sexual activity in public parks; Ticket scalping

Cell 3B (Offices Consensual) = Corruption of public officials; Insurance fraud

Cell 4B (Retail Consensual) = Fencing stolen property

Cell 5B (Industrial Consensual) = Prostitution in industrial areas

Cell 6B (Agricultural Consensual) = (None)

Cell 7B (Educational Consensual) = Drug trafficking in and around schools

Cell 8B (Human Service Consensual) = (None)

Cell 9B (Public Ways Consensual) = Drug trafficking via vehicles; Open-air drug trafficking; Prostitution on streets and in alleys; Illegal vehicle towing operations

Cell 10B (Transport Consensual) = (None)

Cell 11B (Open/Transitional Consensual) = Drug trafficking across borders; Marijuana cultivation in open fields and forests; Sexual activity in public places

Cell 12B (Cyberspace Consensual) = Prostitution on the Internet; Drug trafficking via cell phones

Cell 1C (Residential Interpersonal Conflict) = Child custody disputes; Domestic disputes; Landlord-tenant disputes; Neighbor disputes; Unauthorized parking on private property

Cell 2C (Recreational Interpersonal Conflict) = Crowd disorder at festivals or sporting events

Cell 3C (Offices Interpersonal Conflict) = Labor-management disputes

Cell 4C (Retail Interpersonal Conflict) = (None)

Cell 5C (Industrial Interpersonal Conflict) = Labor-management disputes

Cell 6C (Agricultural Interpersonal Conflict) = (None)

Cell 7C (Educational Interpersonal Conflict) = Fighting in schools (mutual combat)

Cell 8C (Human Service Interpersonal Conflict) = Child custody disputes in social service offices; Fighting in hospital waiting rooms (mutual combat)

Cell 9C (Public Ways Interpersonal Conflict) = Aggressive driving; Illegal parking in handicapped spaces; Traffic congestion around schools; Traffic congestion at emergency rescue sites; Traffic congestion on roads at rush hour; Unauthorized parking on private property

Cell 10C (Transport Interpersonal Conflict) = (None)

Cell 11C (Open/Transitional Interpersonal Conflict) = (None)

Cell 12C (Cyberspace Interpersonal Conflict) = Bullying on the Internet

Cell 1D (Residential Incivilities) = House parties; Drug houses/shooting galleries; Noise from animals (e.g., barking dogs); Obscene phone calls; Window peeping

Cell 2D (Recreational Incivilities) = Disorderly youth in parks; Drunken and disorderly conduct around bars; Noise from nightclubs; Sex with corpses in cemeteries

Cell 3D (Offices Incivilities) = (None)

Cell 4D (Retail Incivilities) = Disorderly youth in shopping malls

Cell 5D (Industrial Incivilities) = Noise from industrial activity; Offensive odors

Cell 6D (Agricultural Incivilities) = Offensive odors

Cell 7D (Educational Incivilities) = Disorderly conduct in public libraries; Indecent exposure by males in public libraries

Cell 8D (Human Service Incivilities) = (None)

Cell 9D (Public Ways Incivilities) = Chronic public inebriation; Cruising; Disorder at day laborer sites; Disorderly youth in public places; Graffiti; Illegal street vending; Indecent exposure by males and females; Loitering in public places; Noise from car stereos; Noise from vehicle alarms; Noise from motor vehicles; Noise from people in entertainment districts; Panhandling; Public bathing, urinating, and defecating

Cell 10D (Transport Incivilities) = Disorderly conduct on transportation vehicles and stations; Graffiti on transportation vehicles (buses, trains); Panhandling in and around transport stations

Cell 11D (Open/Transitional Incivilities) = Animal waste; Chronic public inebriation; Trash scavenging

Cell 12D (Cyberspace Incivilities) = (None)

Cell 1E (Residential Endangerment) = Accidental shootings in the home; Animal bites in the home; Animal cruelty; Arson to conceal evidence of murder in homes; Child fatalities: shaken baby deaths, Munchhausen by proxy syndrome, and sleeping rollover deaths; Child neglect and abuse in the home; Clandestine drug labs; Endangerment by alcohol/drug intoxication in private residences; Endangerment by medical condition; Exposure of children to hazardous materials; Juvenile runaways; Missing people; Prescription-drug abuse; Sexual relations by an adult with a minor in the home or a hotel/motel; Stalking people at their home; Suicide attempts in residences; Underage drinking; Witness intimidation

Cell 2E (Recreational Endangerment) = Animal bites at parks; Animals endangering humans at zoos; Crowd disorder at sporting and entertainment events; Endangerment by alcohol/drug intoxication in bars; Mass evacuation of civilians from stadiums during emergencies; Underage drinking in bars; Underage drinking in parks

Cell 3E (Offices Endangerment) = Arson for profit; Bombs and bomb threats; Hazardous materials scares (e.g., Anthrax)

Cell 4E (Retail Endangerment) = Arson for profit; Weapons trafficking (illegal)

Cell 5E (Industrial Endangerment) = Abandoned/derelict/unsafe buildings; Arson for profit

Cell 6E (Agricultural Endangerment) = Animals endangering humans on farms; Animal cruelty; Animal endangerment; Sex with animals

Cell 7E (Educational Endangerment) = Arson by juveniles for thrills (juvenile fire-setting); Bombs and bomb threats; Endangerment by alcohol/drug intoxication on college campuses; Hazardous materials scares in schools (e.g., Anthrax); Weapons in schools

Cell 8E (Human Service Endangerment) = Assaults on staff in probation offices; Child neglect and abuse in correctional facilities, churches, youth organizations, and group homes; Juvenile runaways; Missing people: Walkaways from healthcare and assisted living facilities

Cell 9E (Public Ways Endangerment) = Abandoned/derelict vehicles; Aggressive/reckless bicycling/skateboarding; Animal bites on sidewalks; Arson to conceal evidence of murder in vehicles; Auto theft for thrills or temporary transportation (joyriding); Chronic public inebriation; Crowd disorder at political demonstrations; Crowd disorder at student parties; Dignitary and celebrity protection; Drive-by shootings; Drunken-, drug-, age-, and sleep-impaired driving; Endangerment by alcohol/drug intoxication; Endangerment by medical condition; Hazardous loads spilling on roadway; Hazardous materials (including broken glass, syringes); Hazardous parking; Inattentive driving; Juvenile runaways; Mass evacuation of citizens during emergencies; Pedestrian injuries/fatalities; Protection of controversial speakers; Speeding in residential areas, school zones, and highways; Stalking people in public places; Street racing; Suicide by motor vehicle; Toy guns; Traffic crashes in which drivers flee the scene (hit-and-run crashes); Traffic crashes (with other vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, fixed objects, or animals); Traffic signal violations (e.g., running red lights and stop signs)

Cell 10E (Transport Endangerment) = Bombs and bomb threats; Child fatalities: abandonment in hot vehicles; Hazardous materials scares (e.g., Anthrax); Pushing people into paths of trains; Traffic crashes with trains; Train derailments; Unlicensed driving; Vehicle lockouts

Cell 11E (Open/Transitional Endangerment) = Abandoned/derelict/unsafe buildings; Accidental injury of transient people; Accidental drowning; Accidental shootings while hunting; Aggressive/reckless boating; Animal cruelty; Animal bites; Animals endangering humans; Animal endangerment; Arson by juveniles for thrills (juvenile fire-setting); Clandestine drug labs; Juvenile runaways; Hazardous and illegal waste dumping; Shooting firearms in celebration; Target shooting near occupied dwellings; Transient encampments; Underage drinking

Cell 12E (Cyberspace Endangerment) = Child pornography; Sexual relations by an adult with a minor; Weapons trafficking (illegal); Witness intimidation on the Internet

Cell 1F (Residential Protest and Political Action) = (None)

Cell 2F (Recreational Protest and Political Action) = (None)

Cell 3F (Offices Protest and Political Action) = Crowd disorder during political demonstrations

Cell 4F (Retail Protest and Political Action) = Crowd disorder during labor-management conflicts/consumer boycotts

Cell 5F (Industrial Protest and Political Action) = Crowd disorder during labor-management conflicts

Cell 6F (Agricultural Protest and Political Action) = (None)

Cell 7F (Educational Protest and Political Action) = Crowd disorder during political demonstrations on campuses

Cell 8F (Human Service Protest and Political Action) = Crowd disorder during political demonstrations at abortion clinics

Cell 9F (Public Ways Protest and Political Action) = Crowd disorder during political demonstrations on streets and sidewalks

Cell 10F (Transport Protest and Political Action) = (None)

Cell 11F (Open/Transitional Protest and Political Action) = Crowd disorder during political demonstrations in forests and woodlands

Cell 12F (Cyberspace Protest and Political Action) = (None)

Cell 1G (Residential Misuse of Police) = False intrusion alarms at houses; False reporting of crime; Misuse and abuse of 911

Cell 2G (Recreational Misuse of Police) = (None)

Cell 3G (Offices Misuse of Police) = Bomb threats; False intrusion alarms at office buildings; Fraudulent insurance claims; Hazardous materials scares (e.g., Anthrax)

Cell 4G (Retail Misuse of Police) = False intrusion alarms at retail establishments

Cell 5G (Industrial Misuse of Police) = False intrusion alarms at factories and warehouses

Cell 6G (Agricultural Misuse of Police) = (None)

Cell 7G (Educational Misuse of Police) = Bomb threats; False intrusion alarms at schools; Hazardous materials scares (e.g., Anthrax)

Cell 8G (Human Service Misuse of Police) = (None)

Cell 9G (Public Ways Misuse of Police) = False vehicle intrusion alarms

Cell 10G (Transport Misuse of Police) = (None)

Cell 11G (Open/Transitional Misuse of Police) = (None)

Cell 12G (Cyberspace Misuse of Police) = (None)

Endnotes

1. Goldstein (1990).
2. Higdon and Huber (1987); Eck and Spelman (1987); Goldstein (1990)
3. Spelman (1995).
4. LaVigne and Wartell (1998).
5. Truman and Planty (2012).
6. San Marcos Police Department (2011).
7. Eck (2003).
8. Higdon and Huber (1987).
9. Eck and Clarke (2003).

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About the Author

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Michael Scott is director of the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing and chair of the judging committee for the Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing. Scott was a clinical professor at the University of Wisconsin Law School. He also was the chief of police in Lauderhill, Florida, an agency he founded in accordance with problem-oriented policing principles; the former special assistant to the chief of police in the St. Louis (Missouri), Metropolitan Police Department, where he oversaw the adoption of problem-oriented policing; the director of administration in the Fort Pierce (Florida), Police Department; the legal assistant to the police commissioner in the New York City Police Department; and a police officer in the Madison (Wisconsin), Police Department. Scott was a senior researcher at the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) in Washington, D.C., and, in 1996, he received PERF's Gary P. Hayes Award for innovation and leadership in policing. Scott holds a law degree from Harvard Law School and a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. He can be reached at mscott@popcenter.org.

Recommended Readings

The following publications provide more extensive information about evaluation methods. Some were written for police, others for undergraduate students, and still others for research practitioners.

Bachman, Ronet, and Russell K. Schutt (2001). *The Practice of Research in Criminology and Criminal Justice*. Thousand Oaks, California: Pine Forge Press.

This college-level text provides a well-written description of the theory and practice of data collection, measurement and research design as applied to criminal justice research and evaluation.

Campbell, Donald T., and Julian C. Stanley (1963). *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

This is the "bible" of evaluation designs. Virtually every methods text adapts material from this book. It is still indispensable, and though short and to the point, it is not a fast read.

Clarke, Ronald V. (1992). *Situational Crime Prevention: Successful Case Studies*. Albany, New York: Harrow and Heston.

The case studies in this volume illustrate a wide variety of evaluation design applications.

Converse, Jean M., and Stanley Presser (1986). *Survey Questions: Handcrafting the Standardized Questionnaire*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

This book is a standard reference in survey research. Its title explains its content.

Czaja, Ronald, and Johnny Blair (1996). Designing Surveys: *A Guide to Decisions and Procedures*. Thousand Oaks, California: Pine Forge Press.

This is a good introductory guide to survey question design.

Eck, John E., and Nancy La Vigne (1994). *Using Research: A Primer for Law Enforcement Managers* (2nd ed.). Washington, D.C.: Police Executive Research Forum.

This short book was developed for practicing police officials who have no background in research or statistics. It addresses most of the fundamentals and serves as a bridge to more-advanced introductory texts used in most college courses.

Eck, John E., and Nancy La Vigne (1993). *Police Guide to Surveying Citizens and Their Environment*. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Assistance. NCJ No. 143711.

This monograph describes the basics of conducting surveys of the public and of the physical environment. It contains a number of examples and survey instruments. It can be downloaded from www.ncjrs.org.

Harries, Keith (1999). *Mapping Crime: Principle and Practice*. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice.

This is an excellent introduction to the principles of crime mapping.

Hoover, Larry T. (1998). *Police Program Evaluation*. Washington, D.C.: Police Executive Research Forum and Sam Houston State University.

This compendium of articles describes how evaluation can be applied to a variety of police functions. Though not tailored explicitly for problem-oriented projects, the examples and concepts are often transferable.

Kosslyn, Stephen M. (1994). *Elements of Graph Design*. New York: W.H. Freeman.

This well-organized book offers practical and straightforward advice on how to create effective charts, graphs and figures with data. It is filled with good and bad examples.

Trochim, William, and James P. Donnelly (2007). *The Research Methods Knowledge Base*. 3rd ed. Cincinnati, Ohio: Atomicdog. www.atomicdogpublishing.com

This college text was designed for use online, but is available in a paperback version. It is very practical and shows how to create complex evaluation designs out of simpler designs in order to address particular situations. It also contains an excellent discussion of measurement and sampling.

Weisburd, David (1998). *Statistics in Criminal Justice*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth.

This is a very well-written introductory college text in statistics, taking the reader from the very basics to an intermediate level.

Weisel, Deborah (1999). C*onducting Community Surveys: A Practical Guide for Law Enforcement Agencies*. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics and Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. NCJ No. 178246.

This practical guide for law enforcement agencies accompanies the crime victimization survey software developed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. It describes how surveys have been used to improve policing services, how to identify survey goals, and the procedures for survey administration and analysis. It can be downloaded from www.puborder.ncjrs.org.

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